501 396 His constructive skill with wood has been most successfully expressed in the vehicles for land and water transport—the bullock cart and the canoe. The classic pattern for a Burmese boat is the *laung*, built from a single hollowed-out trunk of the *thingan*, a tough tree growing near the water with a girth of 4—20 feet and a height of 15—75 feet. The trunk is hollowed out into a rough hull, the outside is adzed, circles of holes are bored through for a guide, and the shell is hollowed to a uniform thickness. It is then waterlogged, and fired slowly, the symmetry being carefully tended as the hull opens out with the firing. Planks are built up on the sides to increase capacity. These laungs, of a capacity from 10—40 tons, are the universal canoes of the rivers and creeks of Burma. Poled upstream and rowed downstream, they are ideal in the ease with which they can be bumped against rocks or got off shoals, the thingan hull lasting for 20 or 30 years. The bigger boats which still carry rice and other produce up the Irrawaddy are built up from stout ribs on a style which simulates the solid hull of the laung. These boats carry enormous sails and a crew of about fifteen men. Their bulk-heads are richly carved, and they glide along the great Irrawaddy, stately and calm beside the chugging river-steamers, their prows rising and falling like the heads of some fabulous birds.

493 The Burmese cart is a poem in curves of wood. The floor of the cart gives a slight curving sweep from front to back, the sides exaggerate this in crescents that sweep right up into the air, and the circle of the wheel has good balance and strength behind its symmetry. For the sake of the curves, the root wood of cutch and the curved branches of thingan are specially sought out.

326 788 534 Brassware, for which the old centres were at Amarapura and Sagaing in Upper Burma, we were familiar with in bells and gongs. Bells are kept by the Burmese for sacred uses only. The delicate small bells hung high around the spires of pagodas, often of gold and silver, have tongues that are moved by the winds to give a sweet testimony, to all spirits, of the good work of men who built the pagoda and other men who pray below, and give the praying devotee a tinkling reassurance of his merit. The great big bells, however, made of molten copper and tin poured into moulds of clay and wax in pits dug in the earth, have no tongues; but when struck with deer's antlers or a wooden striker they [552] sing a deep note of sweetness. The names given to some famous bells reflect their beauty: *Maha Ganda* (Great Voice), *Mahatti Thadda Ganda* (Great Sweet Sound). All big bells are hung on a cross bar with wooden supports at pagodas, where after recitation of precepts we picked up the striker in turn and struck three times to announce to the spirits

around that we had meritoriously praised the Lord Buddha, and then touched the earth with the striker to pass the message to the spirits there also. These big bells may weigh up to 25 tons; the bell at Mingun is said to be the second largest in the world. They are all inscribed with lauds and invocations for the welfare of the donor. Gongs of brass are the bells of the town-crier; all announcements are punctuated with the striking of a gong. *Maung le htu tè* is the equivalent of "broadcasting it around the town". Much attention is paid to the melodiousness of gongs for the Burmese have a musical instrument called the *kyi-waing*, which is a circular frame on which graduated gongs are hung and beaten with a knobbed stick to harmonize with the rest of a Burmese orchestra.

There were numerous other objects for which my mother would never accept a substitute from English shops because they did not cater for our ingrained customs. Soup never tastes right when eaten with a metal spoon—we always used Burmese china spoons bought for about one anna each; rice is not to be stirred with a metal utensil either—the Burmese wooden ladle for this is the *yaung-ma*, the same word as for sister-in-law, the stirrer of trouble. There were, of course, particular places in Burma which supplied particular articles of dress, but I took an interest in this only when I was grown up.

What delights me is to find now that, in the imported things about the house also, all minkadaw households bought a standard type. This was probably due to the enterprise of Messrs. Rowe and Co., a Rangoon firm selling general goods, which established branches in all district towns to provide officers with anything they could not buy in native shops. We all bought Gold Medal camp chairs and camp cots from Rowe's. We bought durwan's kerosene lamps for bedrooms, Storm King and Petromax lamps with incandescent mantles for sitting and dining rooms, we bought crockery which came out in three or four good standard patterns, with an adaptation from the orthodox English dinner service to provide soup and curry dishes suitable for Burmese meals. We got cane furniture made in the local jails, odd chairs and always the half-wood half-cane stores box to serve on tours, and the long basket trays in which my father's files and papers would come home and go to the office every day, on the head of the *chaprassi*. The *hpas*, soft expandable cane boxes in which Burmese people pack their bedding when travelling, were always covered with green canvas from Rowe's. With these hpas, matching the Gold Medal camp cots and chairs, the boxes from the jails, a clerk and two or three girls looking after the children, and a general air of solicitous attention from the people around, no one could mistake an a-so-ya government official's family on its touring travels.

873 We could not stage these shows at the University owing to the length of
536 them and the difficulty of procuring a company. We saw them often in childhood when there were two great companies touring the districts. Pu Sein and Sein Gaden came with their companies to the district towns; they hired the local hall, and then charged their audiences by mat-space. Buyers of spaces came earlier in the day and laid down their thinbyus over the rough bamboo mats provided. At night the whole family, including grandmothers and young children, arrived with pillows, fans, goblets of drinking water and things to eat, and squatted and reclined each on its own mat. Vendors of pickled tea and jujube plums, both of which have the effect of keeping one awake, walked in and sold their packets without a license, but just as an overflow from the row of food stalls that had sprung up in the lane leading to the hall.

545 At the University, however, we always staged *anyein-pwès*, and not
873 these night-long zat-pwès. An anyein is a much handier, more compact sort of entertainment. The troupe consists of two clowns, one chief dancing girl and two subsidiary ones, and a band of musicians. Such a troupe can be hired for about Rs. 40/-. No seats are ever bought for an anyein; people hire them to celebrate weddings, shinbyus and other happy events. They perform on a rough open-air stage, and the show is free to all who wish to flock to see it. The poorest beggars may perch themselves on neighbouring trees and fences to enjoy the four-or five-hour programme of songs, dances and jokes.

545 When an anyein was held at University College, we entered the
• 534 grounds at about 7 p.m. and found the stage with its rear occupied by the orchestra tuning instruments and practising snatches of the airs; in the
[182] centre a basinful of offerings to propitiate the nat-spirits so that the entertainment will be a success; and at the opposite corners of the front of the stage the two clowns squatting, watching the audience enter and uttering declamations about the occasion of the entertainment; but as yet in a very desultory fashion, while they scratched their heads, cleaned their ears and chewed betel, because nobody was ready to pay full attention. Very shortly, however, the orchestra came to life in a harmonious concert. Within the circular frames of two big harmonicums, about two to three feet high and four to five feet in diameter, sat the master players. The *kyi-waing* master was surrounded by a row of graduated gongs strung along the inside of the harmonicum, which he struck with a knobbed stick in quick melody. The *saing-waing* master produced a thinner strain from his graduated drums which he struck with the flat of his fingers. Between the two sat a *hnè* player, blowing loudly his clarionet which had a wide bell-shaped mouth; the *pulway* master played lively dancing notes on his flute; a gentle looking youth

kept rhythm with a pair of brass cymbals; and an energetic youngster banged his split bamboo clapper in the same syncopation. At intervals could be heard the patala player who struck melodiously with two bamboo sticks on thin slats of bamboo laid side by side on the strings of a long narrow box which dipped in the centre and ascended at the ends. 545 534

While the orchestra thus practised and played and the clowns talked half-heartedly and the people streamed in, one of the subsidiary dancing girls was carrying out her toilet at the left rear of the stage, with a mirror propped against a box and in full view of the audience. The dancer's dress is an adaptation of the formal Burmese court dress, the adaptations being in the direction of making it more coquettish and frivolous. The basque of the tight-fitting silk jacket is stiffened with bamboo wire in the seams and hems to make it curve up like wings from waist and hips; the unseamed skirt which is folded over tightly and pinned down on one side with only a knee-high slit to allow dancing movements is held in place by a belt with a big ornate buckle, whereas a woman of dignified movements should be able to keep her longyi up with only a deft twist—hence the expression *"htamein ma-naing, pawa ma-naing:* no mastery of skirt, no mastery of scarf" as a description of a slovenly woman; the hair is in a cylindrical woman's sadone with a floating side-tress, but part of it also hangs down in a fringe all around after the fashion of a girl in her early teens, and the whole cylinder is covered with sprigs of flowers; the face is painted chalk white by the addition of a cosmetic containing lead to the thanakha, the favourite brand being called in Burmese *"B Nga Lon:* Five B's", with the parenthetic explanation in English: "Burma Brand Burmese Belle's Beautifier"; a gauzy scarf and a fan set off the young dancing lady, but, unfortunately, her small and lively feet are encased in white cotton socks in order to provide a whiter effect than the Five B's can do.

By the time her toilet is done, the audience is already seated, the clowns are getting bored and begin to shout for her with mock honorifics. The dancer comes out with a wooden face and lackadaisical air, makes obeisance to the audience and to the beautiful of offerings, and then sits with her knees tucked under her, presenting to the crowd a winged back of perfect indifference. The clowns now launch into a description of her person, talents and reputation with mock rhapsodies and many bawdy puns. Then they formally call on her to dance and, just as the audience begins to grow a bit restive, the girl rises, turns around and gives one quick short dance. From now on the programme can go ahead with a swing. Jokes, antics, songs, dances and repartee follow in fast succession, with the orchestra accompanying. After an hour the next girl takes the stage, followed at about 10 p.m. by the chief dancer, 545

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CHAPTER XVIII

BELLS

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"THIS Bell is made by Koo-na-lin-gala, the priest—and weight 600 viss. No one body design to destroy this Bell. Maulmein, March 30th, 1855. He who destroyed to this Bell, they must be in the great Heell, and unable to coming out."

This inscription runs round the rim of the great bell at the Kyaik-than-lan pagoda at Maulmein. It is hardly a fiftieth part of the Maha Ganda at Rangoon, which, in turn, is a great deal smaller than the huge monster at Mengôn, near Mandalay; but it is noticeable as being the only bell in Burma, as far as I am aware, which has an English inscription on it. The circumstance is scarcely to be considered in the light of a compliment, for the bell has not the character of exceptional sanctity, and there is a lengthy Pali inscription on the upper part giving further particulars, and commending the pious donors to the safe keeping of the 5000 nats who guard the faith, the tutelary nats of the universe, the nats of the earth, the air, the forest, and the city; but there is nothing whatever in the shape of menaces to such as may have evil designs on the bell. Koo-na-lin-gala, the priest, however, no doubt thought this English addition very necessary and by no means unwarranted; for only two years before, after the conclusion of the second Burmese war, in 1853, the British troops had tried to carry off the sacred Shwe Dagôn bell, and had gone the length of getting it on board of a ship. Unfortunately the vessel turned over, and Maha Ganda, the "great sweet voice," was capsized into the mud at the bottom of the Rangoon river.

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The good mendicant, therefore, who superintended the casting of the bell for the Maulmein payā doubtless thought that none but the utmost terrors would serve to scare off the sacrilegious Briton, and therefore it is with punishment in awidzi, the lowest of the eight chambers of hell, ordinarily reserved for parricides, assaulters of an ascetic, and railers at the Buddha, that all who meditate harm to the Kyaik-than-lan bell are threatened. The fiery monk may rest happy. The bell has hung unmolested from the big crossbar, resting on its two huge teak uprights, and will doubtless long remain safe on the somewhat cramped platform at the end of the Taungnyo range.

The love of bells in Burma is somewhat remarkable. Every large pagoda has some dozens of them, of all sizes, hanging round the skirts of the zedi, the image-houses, and sacred posts. One or two were put up with the central shrine itself; others have been added at various times by the religious. Most of them have long Pali inscriptions on them recording the praises of the Lord and the aspirations of the giver. Here and there are a few with Burmese dedications, presented by poor, simple jungle people, the monks in whose district did not know Pali, or had the grace to say they were not learned enough to write an original composition in that language. Every Burman has learned a certain number of Pali formulæ to enable him to worship at the pagoda, but few even of the most renowned sadaws have anything like a thorough knowledge of the sacred language. Hence, when there is a modest monk in the kyaung, the simple cultivators have to fall back on their own vernacular, and produce plaintive appeals like the following:—

"This bell was moulded with great care and much expense, and is humbly offered by Maung San Ya, of the hamlet of Nga-pe-u, in the township of Maubin, and Mama Gyi, his wife, who seek refuge in the boundless mercy of the pitiful Buddha, in the majesty of the eternal Law, and in the example of the venerable Assembly of the Perfect, the three gems. They visit the precious things faithfully on the appointed days. Applaud, ye pious! They humbly strive to gain for themselves merit. May the good nats who guard the forest and the field look smilingly on them and

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protect the poor man's crops. May the nats who dwell in the air and the earth defend from evil creatures the two fat bullocks which plough the fields. May the guardian nats of the house and the city keep from harm Chit U, their son, and little Ma Mi, their darling daughter. And may the merit of this offering be shared with their children and with all living beings. May the excellent Lord pity them, the good spirits smile on them, the holy assembly receive them. So shall Maung San Ya and Mama Gyi gain much merit and rejoice in presenting this bell. Weight, seventy-five viss."

Such dedications are found here and there, but they are not common, for half the honour of presenting the bell is lost if the common crowd can read what is written on it; and doubtless Maung Chit U, when he has been to an English school, and has got a place under Government, or in an English merchant's office, will be rather ashamed of the quaint humility of his father's offering.

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The bells are not intended to summon worshippers to their devotions. There is no necessity for such a call where there is no formal service. Every man is responsible to himself only for his religious state; no one else has anything directly to do with him, or can give him help. The monks themselves display but little concern in the spiritual state of the laity. If a man is to attain a favourable change in a succeeding existence, it must be by his own exertions. He knows the regular duty-days, and on these and on the special feast-days he goes to gain kutho for himself and better his chance towards a new transincorporation. If he is a fond man, he parcels out the merit acquired by his devotions among those members of his family or friends who have not been to the pagoda. The use of the bells is to direct attention to the fact of the lauds of the Buddha having been recited. The worshipper, when he has finished, goes to one of the bells and strikes it three times, to bring to the notice of the guardian spirits and the four worlds what he has been doing. There are always a number of deer's antlers and billets of wood lying near the bell for this purpose. None of them have clappers, and metal is not used to strike them. There is no objection whatever to a non-Buddhist striking

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the bell; it is indeed rather a kindly action, for the more clangour there is the more likely the nats are to observe the devotions going on. After the bell itself has been struck it is proper to strike the ground, so that the spirits of the earth may know as well as the guardians of the air. Most of the bells have a fine tone, and a flick with the finger is sufficient to cause a vibration through the whole twenty-five tons of metal in Maha Ganda. What sound the Mengôn bell, second only in size to that presented by the Empress Catherine to Moscow, is capable of producing, will never, probably, be known, for the supports have given way, and half of the rim rests on the ground. But, as Colonel Yule says, it would have at any time required a battering-ram to bring out its music. It has, since the annexation, been hung by the enterprise of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company.

Besides those suspended round the precincts of the payā, the hti, or umbrella, on the top of the edifice, is always hung with a multitude of bells. Those on the more sacred shrines are very often entirely gold or silver. Several on the Shwe Dagôn are of gold, studded with precious stones, and are worth many hundred pounds sterling apiece. These, of course, are furnished with tongues, and the slightest breeze causes a constant harmonious tinkling, dear to the worshipper's heart. The object of these bells is identical with that of those below on the platform—to attract the attention of the good spirits in Tawa-deintha, and other abodes of the nat-dêwas on Mount Myinmo.

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Though the bells are very well moulded, the mode of casting them is of the most primitive possible character. A mould of clay is formed to represent the inside. This is covered with bees'-wax to the proposed thickness of the metal, and over this again is placed a heavy layer of clay, mixed with chopped paddy straw. Through this outer covering there are a number of funnel holes in parallel rings at distances of six or nine inches, and through these the molten metal is poured in, melting and taking the place of the bees'-wax, which flows out at the bottom. Straws inserted through the clay let out the air and steam. Thus the bell is formed in a series of rings one above the other. The

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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325 copper and tin are melted together in small open-air furnaces round about, and the crucibles are carried in little wicker baskets. Large bells usually are made in a pit dug in the ground. The metal images of the Buddha for the pagodas are cast in a similar way. When the mass has cooled, the outside is polished, and any flaws there may be are patched up. Then the inscription is chiselled on, and the bell is solemnly dedicated.

325 527 The casting is made quite as much a ceremony as it used to be in the Middle Ages in Europe. The whole district gathers to see the operation. Songs are sung, and bands clash and play while the actual casting is going on, and sometimes the vast multitude is wrought up to such a state of enthusiasm that women and children throw in their necklaces, and gold and silver rings and bangles. Traces of these are to be seen in the inside of many bells, in the shape of whitish or yellowish streaks. The workmen sometimes, in the case of large bells, try to strengthen them by twisting iron chains round the inner mould in the midst of the bees'-wax. Such a chain cable is distinctly to be seen in the great ninety-ton Mengôn bell. Since the "Great Monarch" of Moscow became a chapel, this is actually the biggest bell in the world.

788 534 The shape of Burmese bells is not handsome. They come straight down to the mouth like a barrel—not expanding at the rim, like those of European make, but their tone is very sweet. In Burma bells are entirely reserved for pagodas. A Burman never has a bell in his house; and it would, in fact, be no use to him there if he had it. Englishmen do not use them either, so that throughout the whole country the bell is only used for sacred purposes.

000 The following is a translation of the inscription on the bell numbered 15219 in the Indian section of the South Kensington Museum:—

"The Victor, the All-gracious" [referring to Gautama, the Lord Buddha].

"The gist of the discourse on worship, as it appears in the beginning of the Dhamma-set, is as follows:—One must give goods in alms; one must preach the Law: these two things are good deeds both for this world and for the next;

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With the really devout, a worship day always commences on the previous evening, that of the apeitné, or day of preparation. In most country villages, and occasionally even in the larger district towns, where there is more dissipation than devoutness, a few old men, as a voluntary work of merit, go round about the place beating the kyizi, the triangular gong, used only for this and similar religious purposes. The instrument is suspended by a string to a stick carried over the shoulder, and as the sounds vibrate, rise and fall, quicken and die away with the winding and unwinding of the cord, those who intend to keep the duty day well make ready for a start to the pagoda. Mats, sleeping-rugs, blankets, and eatables are gathered together; and the whole family, with the exception of a couple of the children and an old woman or so perhaps, left behind to look after the house, set off in a body, preceded in some cases by a kyizi of their own, struck at intervals by the head of the family, who slings it on a bamboo, to the other end of which, as a kind of equipoise, is fastened a lamp. The purpose of this ceremony of striking the gong is to announce to the four worlds the good work on which the party is engaged. They make their way to one of the numerous zayats, erected round the pagoda for the accommodation of pious people. If the family be a wealthy one they have probably such an open-sided, floored shed of their own, erected for the general use, but virtually reserved for themselves when required. If they have not, or if the shrine is small and the rest-houses few, they put up in one of the general zayats, where they can always find a quiet corner to settle in. There they sleep, or, what is better, tell their beads and meditate.

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Some time before daylight the food intended for the yahans is cooked, and when the sun rises a message is sent to the monastery that everything is ready. The alms have been put together in a heap in the middle of the zayat, in front of the permanent platform on which the mendicants take their station after they have arrived in a long procession of Indian file. In the meantime numbers of other more comfort-seeking laymen, who have slept at home, come trooping in from the town, also bringing offerings for the pagoda, and food for themselves and the pyinsin. When a

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British army as "The Burmese National Anthem." It makes not at all a bad quick march, but it is about as appropriate for a national anthem as "Champagne Charlie is my name." In the acknowledged national airs it is very difficult to get a definite rhythm, the music being apparently, at any rate to all but experts, a mere succession of recitative, more or less Wagnerian in its style.

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The instruments of a full Burmese band always include the following, whether the occasion is the orchestra for a play, the music for a dance, for a wedding, an ear-boring ceremony, or a funeral. A saing-waing, an elaborately carved, circular, wooden frame, painted in parts, standing between two and three feet high, and five feet or more in diameter. Round the inside of this are hung drums of graduated sizes, which are struck with the hands of the performer, who sits in the middle. The alternate dry and saturated state of the atmosphere renders constant tuning necessary, and this is effected by tightening the drum-heads, and also by smearing on with the fingers a paste made of burnt rice husk. The music produced is rather thin in itself, but by no means unpleasing. Similar to it in construction, but not standing so high, is the kyi-waing, the only difference being that graduated gongs take the place of the drums. The gongs are of course beaten with a knobbed stick, and not with the hand. These ponderous instruments can only be carried about in a cart, and their owner keeps perpetual guard over them, sitting in the centre, cheroot in mouth, for they cost a very considerable sum of money. Fair specimens of both the drum and the gong-harmonicon may be seen in the South Kensington Museum. In addition to these, there are in every band two or three hnè, trumpets or clarionets, with a broad bell-shaped mouth, which is movable and ordinarily but loosely attached. The noise of these is always very prominent, and is not relished by people who do not care for the bagpipes. There is also a similar number of pulwè, or pyue, a rude kind of flute. The best pulwè-player is always the leader of the band. Then there are ya-gwin, big cymbals, and than-lwin, little cymbals, and the patma, a long drum like the tom-tom of India and beaten with the hand in the same way. Finally there are the wa le'kôt, each formed of

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● 534 a length of bamboo, extending to five feet occasionally, and split down the centre. These castanets are always in the hands of the most recently joined, and therefore most zealous, members of the band, and are clapped together with an energy which usually makes them unduly prominent. The above instruments serve to constitute a full band.

Besides these, however, there are several other musical instruments used by themselves, and learners—even those who are members of an orchestral band—usually avail themselves of the aid of a teacher to acquire accuracy and delicacy of touch, especially in the case of the harp. The saung consists of thirteen silken strings stretched on a boat-shaped wooden case, with a long, curved handle. The Burman boat, low at the bows, rises to a very considerable height at the stern, and is so like a harp frame that there is a stock story of a country peasant, for the first time in Mandalay, believing that the gilded royal boats in the moat were gigantic harps being seasoned for use in the palace. The sounding-board is formed of thick buffalo-hide, and the instrument is tuned by pushing the strings up or down the curved handle, and so tightening or loosening them. Only the young men play, and the accomplishment is not very common. The handle rests on the left arm and the right hand touches the strings, while the singer plays his own accompaniment. A similar instrument is the migyaung, the crocodile, a sort of guitar with three strings, stretched over a hollow sounding-board, shaped like that uninviting saurian. It is somewhat too primitive, however, to be popular, except with sentimental people. Finally there is the pattala, or bamboo harmonicon, as some call it. This instrument has always evoked approval from even the most fastidious of foreigners, as a singular instance of sweetness of sound produced from most unpromising materials. It consists of a carved and painted box, long and narrow and with high rising ends. From each of the corners of these sides are suspended strings, which hang down in a parabolic curve over the low centre of the box, and to these strings are attached flat strips of bamboo, placed at close intervals. Their tone is regulated by the more or less complete thinning out of the centre of the under side, and little sticks

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are used to strike them with. The notes produced are surprisingly clear and melodious. 534

Fiddles may often be heard played with greater or less skill, especially on the pagoda steps by blind and deformed beggars, but the instrument is not national, and is never, or but rarely, found where Europeans have not penetrated. The same may be said of the young Burmans who play in Rangoon on the concertina and the English fife and piccolo. It is flattering to national pride to notice with what accuracy and rapidity they pick up English airs. 177-53

But except at funerals and other solemn occasions instrumental music is looked upon not so much as a means of enjoyment in itself as an accompaniment to the human voice, and mere orchestral concerts would never draw the crowds which a single good singer can always command. The recitative character of the music is always more evident in the singing than in the instruments, and each "prince" or "princess" has individual peculiarities in the way of trills and staccatos introduced into the legitimate air. As the young musician learns by hanging about the band, so a vocalist follows an acknowledged great singer about and imitates his style, or at any rate learns the tunes and the words. The latter are, however, very immaterial, for the language itself is so pliant that it is easy to express the ideas in rhythm as you go on. Maung Tha Byaw, the great singer of his day, always made his songs as he sung them, and this was so well known that whenever he appeared, whether in a regular play or only to sing a few airs, there were always thirty or forty reporters sitting round to take down his words in their parabaik. This peculiarity of the Thabinwun occasionally got him into trouble. A somewhat incomprehensible piece of palace etiquette rendered it treasonable to sing a thanzan, a new song, before the king. Maung Tha Byaw several times, whether through too great laziness to learn the words, or from the force of habit, transgressed this rule, and was several times ordered out to execution. But he sang to the taunghmu and the pagwet, and these grim customers, the gaoler and the executioner, unable to resist the melody of this latter-day Orpheus, hid him away and exhibited some less talented 533 [644]

13: Khin Zaw 1-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
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114 533 very considerable the labour must have been. Experts in western notation who may be disposed to smile at the *Burmese Music Notes* will realise notwithstanding that here at last are the authentic classical tunes of the Burmese put on record in black and white, ready, and if desired, easy enough to be transcribed into western notation after a perusal of this article and its supplement 'The writing of Burmese music.'

●534 114 In the second book of U San Win is appended most valuable and authentic information on the fundamentals of Burmese music, such as, the tuning of the Burmese harp (စောင်းတော်တစ်), its history; the tuning of the drum-circle (ဆိုင်းဘိုး); the gong-circle (ကြိုးဝိုင်းဆိုင်း); the) *Hnè* (Burmese oboe), big and small; and the succession of Burmese keys. The word 'key' will arouse sudden interest. It will become very interesting indeed in due course. To begin with the classics:—

533 773 "*Preface*:—From the beginning of the world, during the sovereignty of the first President King, the five principal sounds of bass, string, percussion, wind and clapper, had been employed in music in ceremonies of sprinkling the holy water all over the world.

"Three hundred years before Buddha's Enlightenment, when, to avoid the enmity of Pañcala Rājā, the Sakya kings of Kapilavatthu, Devadaha and Koliya left the middle regions (Majjhimadesa) and founded the Tagaung kingdom of Sankassarattha, the same five kinds of instruments were wont to supply music for auspicious Royal occasions and entertainments.

"Also, during the life-time of Lord Buddha, according to *Sakkapañha Sutta*, deva Pañcasikha, the wearer of five top-knots, renowned the Lord in song playing the seven times seven (49) melodic figures of *Vitta pluta* on his celestial harp, which was said to be three-quarters of a *yojana* (*i.e.*, about 2¼ miles)[1] in length, called Beluva-pañdu-vina.

"The Buddhist anchorite Nārada of the middle regions compiled the treatise *Nāradasikkha* from musicology as known to all learned ones from the beginning. In it was mentioned the same seven times seven (49) melodic figures (*tāna*) and three times seven (21) modes (*mucchanā*) which are mentioned in *Sakkapañha Sutta*.

"In the chronicle of Buddha are descriptions of how, when he was seated on the invincible throne Aparājita the devas came and paid homage with musical instruments; and how, on the occasion of His departure from their abode, Tāvatiṁsa to visit Sankassa Nagara, they followed in His wake proclaiming His excellence in music and song.

"After the death of Lord Buddha, too, in the history of the middle regions, the Buddhist nobility and gentry practised music on various instruments, classifying and utilising various kinds of sounds.

"In the history of our Buddhist country of Burma, music and musical instruments existed throughout the successive kingdoms of Tagaung, Srikhettara, Pagan, Myinsaing, Sagaing, Pinya, Ava, Konbaung, Amarapūra, down to Ratnapūra Mandalay.

1. Authorities differ on the exact measurement of *Yojanā*.

533 VĀDI, SAMVĀDI, ANUVĀDI and VIVĀDI (Translated 'sonant' 'consonant' 'assonant' 'dissonant') [illegible] are survivals of a theory of consonance (*Samvaditva* [illegible]) now forgotten. *Samvādī* definitely means the consonance of Fourth and Fifth, as we should say 'Perfect consonance' *Vādī* is the note to which it is so related. *Vivādī* is applied by Bharata to the semitone. He speaks (verse 24) of notes being *vivādī* to one another when they are at the distance of twenty *çrutis*. This is the same thing as two *çrutis* (22-20) which reading actually appears in another manuscript. *Anuvādī* is the name for 'all other relations which are not *vādī*, *samvādī* or *vivādī*. These three relations belong to the tetrachord, and presumably *anuvādī* does too. Current tradition makes *anuvādī* the major Third. But Bharata says 'all other' (*çesha*), as if more than one relationship was *anuvādī*. If it is possible to suppose that in the term *anuvādī* he included the major and minor tones (which together make up the major Third) all the determining elements of Bharata's scale would be accounted for.

Fox Strangways has a chapter on legend and history too. I shall quote the legends in which the same well-known names recur.

533 773 "Once upon a time the great anchorite Nārada thought within himself he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building the inmates of which were numerous men and women, who were all weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped short and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the Rāgs, and Raginis of music, created by Mahādeva; but as one anchorite of the name of Nārada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilful in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken, and that unless Mahādeva or some other discreet and skilful person would sing them properly, there was slender hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Nārada, ashamed, kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven."

"With Nārada, the R'shi who first 'heard' the laws of music, are associated Tumburu, the first singer, and Bharata, the first to draw up rules for the drama, of which music formed a large part. Of Tumburu it is said that he increased the scale in which the *Sāmaveda* was chanted from five notes to six or seven. The treatise which purports to record the doctrine of Nārada, the *Nāradaçikshā* [illegible] is probably of late date (1000 A.D. ?) and gives no clue whatever to the achievement of the Nārada of legend. The treatise which bears the name of Bharata, the *Natyaçastra*, is similarly an eponym. One or other of these three names appears probably in every book on music that has been written, and the existence of the authors is held, though in complete absence of any specific doctrine attributed to them, as a pious belief.."

534 773 Among the Burmans the instrument of Guttila of the famous legend is a harp. Apparently it is a *vīnā*, according to Fox Strangways, "To the *vīnā*, the national instrument, there are so many references both direct and allusive, that it is difficult to choose. Perhaps one story, from the Jatakas, will be enough:

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Sumandana, lord of the city of Sri, and also 35 musicians. Chinese texts give many details of the mission, and the *Hsin-t'ang-hsu* in particular has a long description of Pyu music."[1] 533 175

* * * * * *

Yung-ch'ang also sent his younger brother, master of the city of Hsi-li-i, Shu-nan-t'o, to bring an offering of the music of their country. When they reached Ch'êng-tu, Wei Kao made a collection of their tunes, and considering their dances and musical instruments to be of unusual interest, he made pictures of them to send to Court. They have twenty-two instruments, made of eight different substances, to wit, metal, shell, string, bamboo, gourd, leather, ivory and horn: of metal, 2; of shell, 1; of string, 7; of bamboo, 2; of gourd, 2; of leather, 2; of ivory 1; and of horn, 2. They have four bells shaped like those of the Kucha players, three inches in circumference, with clappers fastened by leather. They sound them in time with the tune. They have two iron clappers, three inches and a half long, and two inches and a half wide, flat in front, but with leather handles at the back. These and the bells are decorated profusely with steamers of brocade. There are four conch-shells, the largest capable of holding about 1 pint (shêng). There are two flat harps; one is 10 ft. long and its belly is 7 inches wide. It has a phoenix-head with neck 2 ft. 5 in. long. The front is decorated with snake-skin. There are 14 strings. The tuning-pegs are on the neck, facing outwards towards the phoenix-head. The other flat harp has "branching pegs." 534 175

There are two lizard-head zithers. One of them is wholly in the shape of a lizard. It is 4 ft. long, and has four legs; the belly is hollowed out. The back and the front are decorated with lizard skin as far as the shoulder, which turns upward like that of the Chinese lute *Ch'in*. It is 7 in. broad; the belly is 8 in. broad, and the tail a foot or more long. On the roller in the empty space there is fixed a barrier upon which are stretched nine strings on each side, attached to eighteen pegs. The front of the other zither is decorated with various-coloured flowers; or as an alternative, covered with snake-skin. There is a dragon-head lute (*p'i-p'a*) which resembles those used by the people of Kucha, but the neck is more than 2 ft. 6 in. long, and the belly 6 in. broad. The dragons' head face each other. There are three tuning pegs and three bridges, with strings to correspond. Two of the pegs are on the neck and one on the throat. It has a cover shaped like a lion. There is also a cloud-head guitar shaped like the foregoing; but the face is decorated with snake-skin and the whole surface with ivory bolts. The head is shaped like clouds. On the top of the pegs are flowers shaped like the ideogram . The three strings, the cover

1. In "Burma down to the fall of Pagan" B.R.S.J. Vol. XXIX, pt. 3, 1939.

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534 and the handle (?) are all decorated with snake-skin. The plectrum is
175 carved. It is ornamented like this for dancing in the K'un-lun style. There are two large gourd-lutes, covered with half-gourds all painted and patterned. On the top are added bronze bowls. The lute itself is of bamboo, with snake patterns across the top. It is 3 feet long; its head is bent as though it were making a bow, and is 2 inches long. The belly is tied with cords that go through the bowl and reach the bottom of the gourd. It would hold about 2 pints (*shêng*) of liquid. The big string plays *t'ai-ts'ou*; the next, *ku hsien*. There is a one-stringed gourd-lute made of speckled bamboo. It is not decorated, but a snake's head is carved in the wood. The string is stretched without a tuning-peg, being tied to the neck. There are four bridges, as in the Kucha guitar. The string plays *t'ai-ts'ou*. There are two kinds of small gourd-lute shaped like the big ones, 2 ft. long. The big string plays *nan-lü*,, the next *ying-chung*. There are two transverse flutes, one about a foot long. When tested by our *lü*, it is completely out of tune; but when one adds a waxen lion's head over the real head and makes six holes with an ivory tusk, it gives the notes of the *huang-chung-shang* mode, and a full succession of semitones can be played on it. There is another flute to which one adds an elephant's head and it at once plays a scale corresponding to that described in the Flute Treatise *Ti p'u* of Hsün Hsü. Moreover it corresponds with the pitch of bells of the "high second" category. There are two double flutes, 2 ft. 8 in. long, separated by a joint. To left and right of the joint are vent holes. The two parts are hollowed out to the right proportions (?). The left side plays *t'ai-ts'ou*. The three holes at the end of the pipe play *ku-hsien-jui-jin*, and *i-tsê*. The other plays *lin-chung*, while the holes at the end play *nan-lü*, *yingchung* and *ta-lü*. If one carries one's finger to a hole underneath, it makes the *t'ai-ts'ou* of the octave above. The two hollowed furrows and seven holes enable one to play the scales of *huang-chung* and *lin-chung*.

There are two big gourd mouth-organs with 16 pipes, 8 on each side. It is shaped like a phoenix' wings. The largest pipe measures 4 ft. 8½ in., and the rest are of various sizes in proportion, as in an ordinary *shêng*. The pipes are also made to look like phoenix' wings. The tongue [*i.e. vibrating "reed"*] is made of bamboo which pierces the gourd right through. In high antiquity the instruments were all of wood and varnish. Afterwards metal was used instead for making the tongue (*huang*), and no instruments were any longer made of gourd. The old style survives only in the P'iao country.

They also have two small gourd mouth-organs similar in construction to the big ones. They play the notes of the mode *lin-chung-shang*. There are two three-sided drums shaped like wine-jars, about 2 ft. high, with broad bottoms and pointed tops, seven

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inches above and four below (?). The belly is nowhere larger than the top. It is made with three layers of snake-skin tied on with blue ropes. When they put it down, they do not keep the drum-skin tied on. The sides are painted with pictures of P'iao musicians holding mouth-organs and drums. There are four small drums like our waist-drums in shape, 5 in. long, only 3½ in. broad at the head, stretched with snake-skin. They have ivory nails and other ornaments; they have no handles and are shaken to mark the beat of the music. The "introducers" hold them. There is an ivory mouth-organ, made by piercing a gourd right through. It is lacquered; then two elephant tusks are put in instead of bamboo pipes. Both tusks play the note *ku-hsien*. There is a three horn mouth-organ, also made by piercing a gourd and lacquering it over; it is fitted with three bull's horns, playing one of them *ku-hsien*, the other two *nan-lü*. The horns are sharpened at the bottom and stuck through the gourd. The handle and mouth-piece are both straight. There is a two-horn mouth-organ of similar construction, *ku-hsien*. The gourd-part is ornamented with coloured designs.

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The names of their twelve tunes are:—

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(i) "Buddha's Seal." In P'iao it is called *mu-t'o-mi*. The natives and Indians sing this song when they minister to the king.

(ii) "Praise of the *sāla* flower." In P'iao it is called *lung-mang-ti*. The natives make clothes of this flower, thinking that it purifies their bodies.

(iii) "The white dove." In P'iao it is called *ta-tu*. They admire the way in which the bird flies or stops, according to its fancy.

(iv) "The white crane's rambles." In P'iao it is called *su-man-ti-li*. It says that when it soars it touches the sky and when it walks, it steps sedately.

(v) "The fighting goat's victory." In P'iao it is called *lai-nai*. Once there was a man who saw two goats fighting on the sea-shore; the stronger thereafter saw the weaker one enter the mountains. The people of the time called it *lai-nai*, which means "the pomp of victory."

(vi) "The dragon-headed single lute." In P'iao it is called *mi-sŭ-mi*. It has one string, but all the five notes complete: which signifies that a king of kings by his single virtue nourishes ten thousand countries.

(vii) "*Jhana* concentration." In P'iao it is called *ch'i-lan-shih*. It tells how one who quits the world, becomes solitary and quiet.

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BURMESE MUSIC.

PART II.

Science and the Burmese Scale.

Technique.

Speculations and Suggestions.

The following tables were made possible by Professor West and his Staff in the Physics department of University College, who measured the *pattalars*, *hnès* (oboes) and the *palwé* (bamboo pipe) in their laboratory. Having measured the frequencies of each tone on the sonometre the intervals between each tone were calculated in cents, the octave having the value of 1200 cents.

Formula : 3986.314 (log 423—log 385) *i.e.* To find the interval in cents between Frequencies 423 and 385—

2.6263	3.6006		
2.5855	2.6107		
0.0408	2.2113	Antilog	162.7 cents.

Table 5

FREQUENCY FIGURES

(from which the intervals in Cents were calculated.)

Siamese Scale (Stumpf's).	Burmese Scale (Hornbostel's).	Burmese Xylophone (Furnivall's).	Burmese Xylophone (West's).
D^1 (846)	672	946·9	1048
T (770)	611·6	870·2	952·6
L 697	552	787·5	875·6
S 629	500	710·9	792·9
F 572	450	647·4	713·2
M 516	408	589·1	649·8
R 470	(369·25)	532	588
D 423	(336)	478·6	524

(Figures in brackets are obtained by multiplication or division of the original figures by 2.)

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533 How all the notes of the Burmese gamut behave will be seen
534 from a glance at the table of actual figures. Table 3.

Originally, Table 2 was constructed from figures obtained by measuring the bamboo *pattalar*, whose actual figures are given in Table 3. Later, after measuring the brass *pattalar* the more correct figures were substituted in the columns of Table 2.

[For the time being I must let the figures speak for themselves making only one comment, that F[1] is indubitably sharper than F-natural, B flatter than B-natural, and G most nearly correct. It should be remembered that my *pattalar* may be anything but a perfect specimen.]

Long after the foregoing paragraph was written, at the instance of Mr. Furnivall, who pointed out the deficiencies of the bamboo *pattalar*, and who supplied the frequencies of the notes of his own *pattalar*, further efforts were made to obtain the measurements of the modern Burmese scale both on a *pattalar* and on the most characteristic Burmese wind-instrument, the *hnè*, *i. e.* an oboe. The *pattalar* (of brass) was carefully tuned by a professional Burmese musician and then measured together with the *hnès* in Dr. West's laboratory in the University of Rangoon. Mr. Furnivall's *pattalar* was measured in the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge. This is an older instrument than the brass *pattalar*, on which the scale is the scale of the present day. The Burmese scale of Hornbostel is still older, the source from which its measurement was obtained being "Zeitschrift für Ethnologie" jaarg. 1911, blz. 601 vv. The oldest of all available measurements is the Siamese scale of Stumpf from "Beitrage zur Akustik und Musikwissenschaft" Bd. III, 1901.

533 Thus, calculating from the given frequencies, the intervals in cents of all the scales have been plotted on graph-paper putting them in chronological order with the hypothetical equi-distant seven tone scale on top, and the just scale and the western tempered scale at the bottom for comparison. The result is a chart showing the probable evolution of the Burmese scale after its advance from the pentatonic basis. *See* folding chart.

Whereas the present western scale moved away from the Just Intonation *via* Mean Tone to its final drastic Equal Temperament into twelve semi-tones, the Burmese scale seems to have moved away from equi-graded seven tones to its present almost diatonic appearance. Being unchromatic it has to make one fixed scale perform the function of at least three so that modulation may be possible to some extent. Table 7 shows to what extent that is possible.

1. Here and elsewhere, except where otherwise indicated by the context, the names of notes merely indicate the relative position in the scale and have no reference to absolute pitch. Thus F here is Fah.

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Table 6.

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The scale of the Burmese oboes *hnè-gyi* and *hnè-galé* compared to the standard (?) Burmese scale.

Hnè-gyi Frequency.	Intervals.	*Hnè-galé* Frequency.	Intervals.	Standard (?) Intervals.
		F¹ 889·2		
			185·8	
		M¹ 798·7		
			190·5	
		R¹ 715·5		
			161·4	
D¹ 572·8	1200	D¹ 651·8	1200	D¹ 1200
	179·7		161·8	160
T 516·7	1020·3	T 593·6	1038·2	T 1040
	159·1		186·2	160
L 471	861·2	L 533·1	852	L 880
	179·8		179·8	180
S 424·5	681·4	S 480·6	672·2	S 700
	140·3		134·4	160
F 391·5	541·1	F 444·6	537·8	F 540
	178·2		186·2	180
M 353·2	362·9	(399·3)	351·6	M 360
	199·4		189·8	160
R 314·8	163·5	(357·8)	161·8	R 200
	163·5		161·8	200
D 286·4	0	(325·9)	0	D 0

(Figures in brackets are obtained by multiplication or division of the original figures by 2).

The above table shows how the scale of Burmese wind-instruments disagrees with that of the *pattalars*. The finger-holes on Burmese oboes (*hnè*) have that "uniformity and symmetry in their appearance" which K. C. Hsiao deprecates. (*See* diagrams 2 and 3). He says that in China the resultant impersonal scale was applied to the playing of stringed instruments *to be in tune with wind-instruments*. Happily for the Burmese scale the measurements of the *hnès* and the *pattalars* do NOT agree—yet.

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That is a hopeful sign that the impersonal scale, which is no more than the result of a lazy way of boring finger-holes on wind-instruments, has not yet usurped the true Burmese scale. This is the time to instruct the makers of Burmese wind-instruments to bore their finger-holes more faithfully to the Burmese scale and with less *uniformity and symmetry in appearance*. Either that, or adopt the diatonic scale entirely with all its advantages.

Actually it has been the Burmese oboists who have been keeping in tune with the other Burmese instruments by means of their wonderful expertness in lipping and blowing their inadequately bored instruments. To them a precision instrument like a modern European oboe with its mechanical keys is merely an impediment. The reed on their own instruments is everything, the system of holes a mere convenience. It is amazing how their *hnès* speak not from the bell but from the staple, and how they speak! My *saya* can obtain all the notes of the chromatic scale on his *hnè* following my western oboe note by note.

Diagrams 2 and 3 will show the different arrangements of the scale on *hnè-gyi* (big oboe) and *hnè-galé* (little oboe), the former beginning and ending with the tonic and the latter with the subdominant. That does not mean that we have tenor oboes, alto oboes, transposing oboes and so on. The arrangement is purely for convenience. The middle one of the finger-holes being the most convenient place for the most frequently fingered predominating note, on the *hnè-gyi*, which plays those tunes with the subdominant predominating, that note is placed in the middle. On the *hnè-galé*, which plays those tunes with the tonic predominating, the tonic is placed in the middle. The theory of the "predominating note" will be developed in the course of this article.

Diagram 2 (Hnè-gyi)

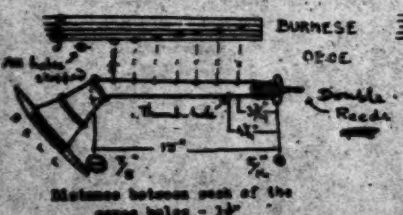
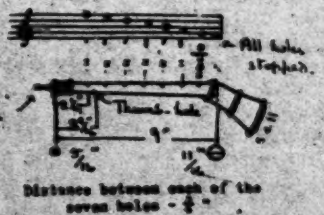


Diagram 3 (Hnè-galé)



The bell of this brass is hung loosely by means of cords. It is of no acoustic value and is often dispensed with. Hnè-gyi is used for grand style songs in the subdominant mode; and Hnè-galé for songs in the ordinary key of the approximate diatonic major scale. All the holes in both instruments are of the same size.

533 may be other than "the fixed scale of the gong-circle." The absence of semitones or accidentals convinced him that modulation into other keys was impossible. On the other hand Mariano decided that there *was* modulation into other keys. If the original scale was not an approximate affair, and the keys into which modulation occurred were also not approximate, then of course no modulation would be possible without semitones or accidentals or equi-distant intervals. It is now Mr. Mariano's turn. I draw attention at this point to the classical diagram of modulation, or rather, the rotation of the position of *aṃśa*[1] and to the examples of the tuning of some Burmese musical instruments, with acknowledgments both to U Ba Choe and U San Win. [*See* diagrams 1, 2, 3, 4].

Diagram 4.

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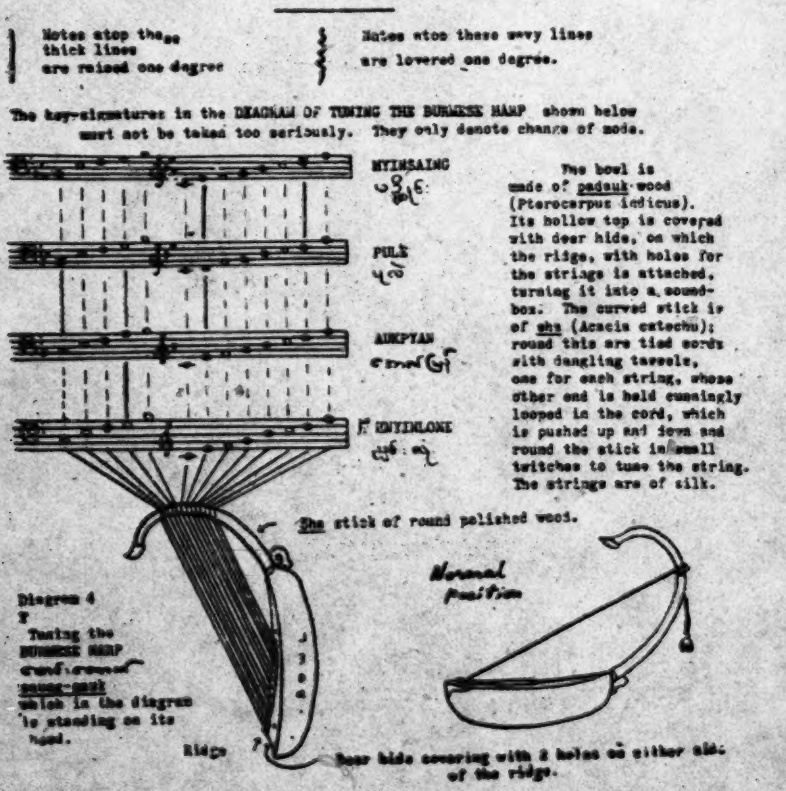

Notes atop the thick lines are raised one degree
Notes atop these wavy lines are lowered one degree.
The key-signatures in the DIAGRAM OF TUNING THE BURMESE HARP shown below must not be taken too seriously. They only denote change of mode.
MYINSAING
PULE
AUKPYAN
ENYINLONE
The bowl is made of padauk wood (Pterocarpus indicus). Its hollow top is covered with deer hide, on which the ridge, with holes for the strings is attached, turning it into a sound-box. The curved stick is of gha (Acacia catechu); round this are tied cords with dangling tassels, one for each string, whose other end is held cunningly looped in the cord, which is pushed up and down and round the stick in small twitches to tune the string. The strings are of silk.
The stick of round polished wood.
Normal position
Ridge
Deer hide covering with 2 holes on either side of the ridge.

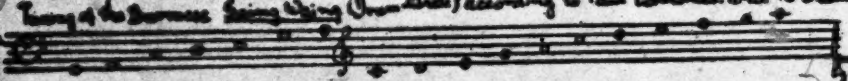
Diagram 4
Tuning the BURMESE HARP
which is the diagram is standing on its head.

1. This word *aṃśa* will be explained in the later pages.

(412 2)

PLATE I

Tuning of the Burmese Saung Gaing (Drum Circle) according to Paul Edmonds. Total 18 drums.

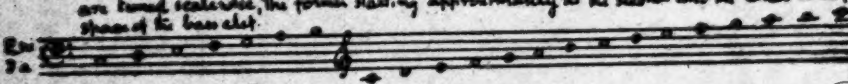


Dito omitting the 2 smallest. Total 16 drums

Dito. Dito. 21 drums and so Thimlat Thaw tuning

Fourth and Ninth drums are tuned 1 degree higher. / The sixth drum also 1½ higher.

Patbala uses: (Bamboo Xylophone) and Kyiwaing (Brass gong circle) are tuned scalewise, the former starting approximately at the second and the latter at the fourth space of the bass clef.



Edmond's notation of Introduction (i.e. Interlude from Atau) to and Saung Gaing.

No bars & no time-signatures.

The correct from Atau (Interlude. Mariano calls it symphony)

Etc.

Edmonds Saung Gaing tune, unbarred and without time-signatures.

For comparison with the tune above. See Example 11 for a proper rendering.

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objects used in the ceremony. The largest table is covered with a lace cloth and on it stands an alabaster statue of the Buddha in a carved and decorated case. Before the figure of the Buddha are offerings of flowers, water, a candle, bananas and coconuts, placed in a special bowl. There is also a dish of puffed rice, a carved gilt bowl, and three new bowls, the latter for the initiates. Each of the bowls contains some of the traditional articles required for a monk: beads, water cups, needle and thread, a straight razor. The carved, gilt begging bowl symbolizes the type used by the Buddha when he was on earth. The second table contains offerings of bananas and coconuts for the monks, and richly decorated gilt trays symbolic of the kind used in the days of the Burmese kings but now only for purposes of decoration. These will be carried by young girls in the procession. The third table contains robes and other gifts for the several monks who are invited to the ceremony. On the fourth table are mats and pillows for the initiates to use. They will be presented to the monks as gifts afterwards.

The elaborate preparations for the ceremony begin on the morning of the preceding day. Young girls go from house to house to borrow betelnut boxes, mats and carpets. In the afternoon a five piece orchestra, hired for the occasion, arrives at the place of the ceremony. It consists of two large drums, a small drum, a wind instrument, a xylophone, and cymbals. Now an elder makes
●534
offerings to the spirits (nats). Bananas, a coconut and a lighted candle are placed on a tray. The elder holds the tray and recites invocations to the good and the evil spirits. The evil spirits are implored not to harass any person who participates in the ceremony, because it is a work of merit; the good spirits are reminded of the meritorious nature of the ceremony and asked to watch over and protect the proceedings. As the spirits are so addressed he swings the tray towards each member of the orchestra in turn, sometimes three, sometimes nine, and sometimes twelve times. The orchestra continues to play intermittently throughout the afternoon, evening, and into the night. Early in the evening the young men of the village come to the monastery with their own musical instruments -- mandolins, guitars, and violins -- and sing and dance into the early morning hours. The orchestra group remains at the monastery all night.

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About midnight, a group of men who are responsible for cooking the food set to work at this task. Women do not normally cook meals for an occasion as large as this; it is felt that the quantities of food required and the amount of labor involved is too much for them to manage. Around three hundred people are expected at a large shinbyu in the village. The cooks, about a dozen middle-aged men, sit around the fire they have lighted in a clearing a short distance
[522]
from the monastery, drink tea, smoke, and make jokes. One man is introduced to the group as the 'all-Burma curry-cooking expert'; another is called 'No. 1 soup cook'; a third is dubbed 'best rice cook of the village.' During the night they prepare large quantities of boiled rice, pork curry, sour bean sprouts, fried fish paste, and a vegetable soup.

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Early on the morning of the day for the ceremony, the initiates are dressed by friends of their families. After a bath, thanakha, an astringent-like paste made from ground tree bark and water, is applied to their faces. Then they don silk longyis and thin, white muslin jackets, beneath which they wear cotton vests. The longyi is very ornate, made of heavy silk, and is seamless. Gold chains and necklace, bracelets and rings are put on. The head dress is a fine silk cloth, wound round the head, and decorated with garlands of flowers.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER VII

BURMESE DRAMATIC PRACTICE

1. The Actors

536 * 537 As Burmese plays were presented to the public by two different classes of performers, actors and puppets, it is necessary to consider each class separately.

Before the decadent period and the arrival of European influences a raised platform as stage was never used by the actors. Their 'stage' was an open space in the centre of the orchestra, around which the audience sat. Both the performers and the audience stood or sat on mats laid on the ground. In rare instances, a low fence of bamboo marked the space on which the play was to be enacted. At court or at the houses of officials, it was slightly different. There, from a special apartment, the floor of which was raised about two or three feet from the ground, the nobility looked down on the actors, behind whom were the members of the orchestra, and behind the orchestra, the audience sat. There was neither curtain nor green-room, and the actors got ready and waited for their parts sitting among the members of the orchestra, in full view of the audience.

The stage scenery consisted of only a tree branch to represent a forest, and a property box to represent the throne. The imagination of the audience had to supplement the inadequate stage scenery. The poetical language and the orchestra helped the audience to visualize the scene. The translations given below in the appendixes will make it clear how artistic the descriptions of scenery in the plays are. To take an example off-hand, the alchemist's description of the forest in the closing scene of *Parpahein* is indeed beautiful.[1]

[1] Cf. The Elizabethan drama. 'The Elizabethan drama, being without scenery and elaborate stage apparatus, made its appeal to the mind rather than to the eye, and used language as the main instrument by which the imagination of its audience was aroused and satisfied. This familiar fact goes far to explain the essential intellectual character of the Elizabethan drama, and the wonderful literary power of the great dramatists.'—*Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. VI, p. 328.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

The orchestra, in the intervals between scenes, played a tune appropriate to the next scene: a royal march for a throne-room scene, a 'battle tune' for a martial scene, a 'woodland tune' for a forest scene, and so on. The tunes were so well known that the audience recognized them at once. The orchestra also played in the middle of a scene, when certain actions could not be satisfactorily represented, as in *Parpahein*, scene 7, where the brothers were supposed to be climbing the palace-walls, and in *Paduma*, scene 4, where the hero was presumed to be swimming in the river to rescue the criminal. The costumes of the actors were picturesque, but not more gorgeous than those of the Elizabethans. They wore appropriate court dresses. The king in full regalia when holding an audience, the ministers in their velvet gowns, the princes and princesses in gold and jewels appeared striking, but except for the material which was silk, the dresses were not expensive, for the seeming gold and jewels were all imitation. Masks were worn for special purposes. Ogre, *naga*-dragon, *galôn*-bird, had masks of their own, which the actors representing them wore. When an ogress was supposed to have assumed human form, the actress representing her raised the mask on to the forehead, making the face visible. A soldier on horseback or on an elephant was represented simply by an actor in uniform holding a dummy horse's head or elephant's head. Actors taking the part of gods wore shining dress, which was traditionally believed to be worn by all gods. The dresses were not the creations of actors. The court dresses of course were copied from those actually worn at court, but the dresses of gods and other spirits and the masks were copies from the stone images which had adorned the platforms of pagodas even before the rise of Pagan in the eleventh century. Perhaps it is not irrelevant to mention that Burmese dramatic performances, in spite of the dependence on the music of the orchestra, were not like masques, for the stage scenery was not elaborate. In this connexion, it should be mentioned that the Burmese actors used the mask purely for the purpose of representing certain characters, and masked dancing was unknown.[1]

An acting troupe consisted of actors proper and members of the orchestra. Women were freely admitted to the troupe, but they were all actresses. Playing in the orchestra was deemed to be a man's

[1] In Siam, even at the present day, the king has special dancers who perform in masks. Masked dancing, for religious purposes, is also known in Tibet.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

536* part, although there was no stage convention preventing women from
534 taking it up as a vocation. The head of the orchestra was also the
462 head of the troupe. He was the most learned and experienced
463 member, and he was responsible for the organization and financial outlay, paying more or less fixed wages to the others, and taking the profits himself. When engaged for a performance, the troupe was paid by public subscription or by some philanthropic person, usually an official, and therefore no charge for admission was made, all being
[565] welcome to it. The Burmese actors as a class, unlike their Elizabethan counterparts who could endow a College of God's Gift or buy a coat-of-arms, were poor. But they never starved, for even the poorest villages would welcome and feed them on their wanderings all over the country. The troupe was one large family, and the children of the members accompanied it. In spite of the prejudice against them and their poverty, the actors loved their art, and enjoyed the performances themselves.

536* There were many conventions connected with the stage, and they can be divided into two classes: those imposed on the actors by themselves, and those imposed by the fear of becoming unpopular with the audience.

795 The actors never forgot that they were originally spirit-dancers,
536* and therefore they had conventions by which they showed their indebtedness to spirit worship. Before the performance offerings of food were made to the thirty-seven *nats*. As a curtain-raiser, there was a performance by a dancer or chorus of dancers. Each wore a red
[533] cloth round the head—the sign of a spirit worshipper. Singing invocations to the *nats* and dancing the appropriate dances, they asked for protection by the spirits, while the orchestra played a bar from each
[751] of the thirty-seven *nat* tunes. It was supposed that if this convention was broken, disaster would befall the troupe, the performance would prove a failure, and the actors would become mad; but often these conventions had been known to be broken, accidentally or otherwise.

536* The actors were looked upon as irreligious and immoral, and on
463 the slightest excuse, they were in danger of being considered profane.
554 Therefore, as has been stated, they took over the conventions from
[779] the *Nibbatkhin*. The Buddha was never impersonated, and an *arahat* or saint only when absolutely necessary, and then by an able and 'serious' actor, who had to keep a fast that day. Not even a mild joke was to be made against the Buddha or an *arahat*, although even monks and the religion itself could be the butt of a clown's wit. But

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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to be under the direct control of the state. But as living actors were now past such control, he turned his attention towards puppets, which were in great demand by the people. He realized the possibilities of puppets in the newly arisen national drama. The puppet show, which was then entirely independent of the drama and the living actors, started with different animals coming out one by one, and each gave a special dance to a particular tune of its own, played by the orchestra, then a *zawgyee*[1] appeared and danced, and finally, a prince and princess came out, made love, sang and danced. The puppets were from 2½ to 3 feet in height, and were worked by strings. As stage, there was a raised platform, with a black curtain, behind which the show-men stood and manipulated the puppets. The men's hands were visible, but as the platform was about four feet high and the audience had to look up, the hands did not distinctly come into the line of vision. The platform was about twenty feet in length, and the width of the part in front of the curtain was about four feet.

The minister put the puppet show under direct state patronage and control. Under him the puppet show became similar to an ordinary dramatic presentation except that puppets performed instead of living actors. The use of puppets to act the play of course caused the introduction of new puppets, but it also rendered the *zawgyee* and animal puppets unnecessary; yet they were retained all

[1] *Zawgyee* is the Burmese term for an alchemist. It is a derivative of the Indian word *yoga* but the Burmese alchemist has little in common with the Indian ascetic. It is an example of how names of Pali and semi-Buddhist origin were applied to already-existing native ideas.

A man (but not a woman) becomes a *zawgyee* when he has introduced into his body the right metal-compounds. To obtain those compounds, he has to experiment on metals with quicksilver or iron. In the first case, he becomes a 'quicksilver *zawgyee*' and in the second, an 'iron *zawgyee*', but both have the same powers. A *zawgyee* lives for millions of years, and can travel in the air, in water, or under the earth, for his body has reached the state when it is beyond the ordinary laws of nature. A halfway stage in the experiments is reached when a 'stone of live metal' (equivalent to the medieval 'philosopher's stone') is obtained. A person in actual possession of the stone can fly in the air and travel under the earth, but his powers are entirely dependent on the stone, i.e. his body is still an ordinary human body. The stone turns lead into silver and brass into gold. It will be seen that a Burman striving to become a *zawgyee* has much in common with the medieval European alchemist.

The beliefs connected with the *zawgyee* are still widely current. For a detailed account of Burmese alchemy, see the writer's 'Alchemy and Alchemists in Burma' in *Folk-Lore*, December 1933.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
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Pegu, many English officials asked to be my father's guests, for although they had been some years in Burma and heard so much of the puppet-show, they had never been able to find one. In 1929, on inquiry, I found that there was not one puppet troupe in Lower Burma, though there were two in Upper Burma; of these, only one was giving performances occasionally, the members of the other being content to earn their living by some other means.

Before considering the probable history of the puppet show before the time of Bodawpaya, it is necessary to give an account of the puppet-shadow show of the east. The home of the puppet show was India. Pischel in *The Home of the Puppet Stage* even contends that the Sanskrit shadow drama preceded the drama proper, but that theory is not accepted by Dr Keith and other scholars. From India, with Hindu expansion overseas, the puppet-shadow show spread, together with the epics and the drama, to Malaya and the East Indies. In Java it found a permanent home, and there shadow drama is still very popular. From Java it spread to Siam and other countries of Indo-China, to Persia, Turkey, Arabia and Japan. Perhaps it even spread to Europe; at least the English Punch is a direct descendant of the Turkish puppet Karageuz, who himself was a descendant of the Sanskrit puppet Vidusaka. To give an idea of the puppet-shadow show, I will give a description of a Java shadow performance.

As 'stage' there is a huge curtain with a light behind it. The puppets are put between the light and the curtain, on which their shadows are thrown. 'The light shines through the transparent material of which his (the puppet's) many-coloured garments are made. His shadow on the curtain glows with such bright hues within the framework of dark shells that he looks like a figure in stained glass. . . . In the middle of the huge curtain is seen a fantastic vine with interlacing branches. Monkeys and birds climb on it, and beneath it two grim guards stand watch. When the play begins, the strange shadow tree vanishes. The stage manager is the *Dalang*. He sits on a mat and gives the play.[1] Back of him is the orchestra to accompany the explanations of the *Dalang*. Whenever a new figure enters the orchestra plays. The men in the audience are allowed to sit on the right of the *Dalang* and see the actual puppets perform, and the children sit at the *Dalang's* left hand. But the women are not permitted to see the real puppets act. They see only the shadows on the

[1] i.e. he recites the words of the play.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

The tall flag-staff (*tagúndaing*) is the most striking of the temple-accessories. It consists of a decorated spar, sixty to eighty feet high, from which floats a long streamer. The head of the pole is ornamented with a mythical animal, generally the *hintha* (*hanza*, a fantastic figure of the Brahmany duck) or else the *kínnayá*, a monster with the body of a woman in princely array and the wings and legs of a bird. The butt of the *tagúndaing*, instead of being planted in the ground, is frequently set between piles which are carved into figures of the mythical *thadyá* (p. 186, No. 7). The pole is held up by transverse bars passing through it and the piles.

79. TAGUNDAING WITH KEINNAYA.

80. TAGUNDAING WITH HINTHA.

Colossal lions (*chinthé*, No. 56) of the Burmese conventional type guard the temple approaches—monsters differing as much in their way from the prototype as the lions of our own heraldry.

Stands shaped like a *baliín* or throne, on which flowers and fruit are offered, are placed on the temple platforms.

Great bells are hung at every shrine (No. 97). The votary takes the deer-antler off the bar and strikes first the ground and then the bell. This is to call to witness beings both under the earth and above the earth and make them participators in the merit of the act of worship. The Burman bell has noble proportions and is hung by metal clasps of rich design, figuring the mythical dragon (*nagá*, No. 47). The tone of the bells is not rich, owing partly to the form, partly to flaws in casting. The greatest bell in Burma is that cast by the Emperor Bodaw Payá, on the European model, in 1790, for the temple he began at Mingún. It is said to weigh eighty-eight tons. A historic bell

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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81. SYMBOL OF MYIMMO-DAUNG.

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of the Burman type is the one cast for the Shwe-Dagôn Payâ by the Emperor Sinbyu Shin in 1773, which weighs forty-one tons.

According to the Burman cosmogony the world consists of four great islands, North, South, East and West, surrounded by the ocean. Burma and the known countries are situated in the south island. In the centre of all rises Mount Meru (*Myimmo-daung*). This centre of the universe is symbolized by a conventional tower provided with niches or caverns for mythical inhabitants of every sort, *Nat*, *Zawdyî* (sorcerers), *Bilu* (ogres), monsters half human and half brute, and dragons (No. 392). The symbol of *Myimmo-daung*, made of bamboo, with paper and tinsel, is a feature of various festivals. In substantial masonry it is a frequent adjunct of the temples.

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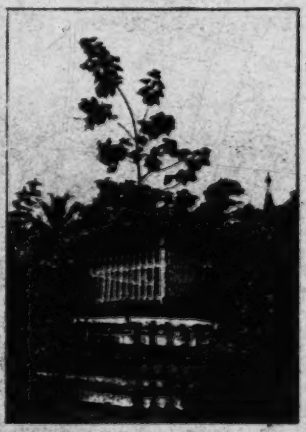
The *Bo* tree (*Bawdi-bin*), together with the rest of the *ficus* family, is sacred to the Hindu. The *Bo* is a variety of the *pipal* (*ficus religiosa*), a deciduous *ficus* with long copper-coloured acumina to the leaves. It is sacred to the Buddhists because it was while resting under the shade of a *Bo* tree at Gáya in Bahár, 600 years before Christ, that Gawdama realised the vanity of the ceremonial and ascetic systems, resisted temptation, and attained to supreme enlightenment, which, as Buddha, it became his mission to impart to mankind. "The *Bo* tree is to Buddhists what the Cross is to Christians" (Bigandet). The original *Mahâ-bodi* was piously tended while Buddhism flourished in India, and trees propagated from it were planted by Buddhist pilgrims. Such a tree is the historical *Bo* tree at Anurádhapúra in Ceylon, planted in 245 B.C. and still flourishing. Young plants cultivated from this tree are brought home to



82. BAWDI TREE.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

000 ●534 Herbert Spencer, *The Origin and Function of Music.*) The simplest Burman instruments are the harp (*saung*) and the dulcimer (*patala*). The harp has a boat-shaped body of wood, with a skin stretched over it for sounding-board. The thirteen strings are of silk, strengthened with varnish. The staves of the *patala* are of dry bamboo (No. 454). These two instruments are not loud; they

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395. BOYS' BOXING-MATCH.

are used to accompany the voice, as we use a harp or guitar, and also by themselves. The loud band (*saing-dí*), which gives so much character to the *pwè*, is composed of clarions, gongs and drums. The clarion (*hnè*) is a loud and strident instrument, the effect of which is enhanced by the second clarion. These are supported by gamuts of tuned gongs (18) and drums (22) in circles (*kyí-waing* and *saing-waing*). There are two tenor drums and a bass drum (*bóndyí*). Time is accentuated by cymbals and clappers. The tone of the gongs is so round and bright that it may be mistaken for a piano; the flourishes played on the *kyí-waing* would imply considerable execution in a pianist. Drums are struck with the fingers, gongs with padded sticks.

526 Boxing-matches are the simplest of the contests which, after plays and pageants, form the chief popular diversions. The spectators sit and stand in a wide circle. At one side is a raised platform for the judges. No women are present. The challenger executes a defiant dance

396. PONY-RACING.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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The Burmans do not appreciate singing in a low pitch. They do not admire men's voices in the baritone or the bass. A-natural is considered the standard pitch for men's and D-natural for women's voices. The higher the tenor the more it is admired. Their ideal singer is a tenor approaching a contralto. On the other hand a soprano voice is less admired than a contralto. The propensity is to cultivate high voices in the men and low voices in the women. The professional singers are true artists and are able to command the feelings of their hearers. The *ngè-dyin thaw*—weeping song—invariably brings tears to the eyes of the hearers. The love songs are full of pathos. An indispensable scene in all the operas is the separation and meeting again of the lovers. It is the most interesting part of the play and is eagerly awaited by the play-goers. The best songs are sung in these scenes and the best talents of the performers called into play. The Burman is readily excited by music; the dancing songs never fail to set his hands and legs going. There is a style of martial music played at boxing-matches, races, and grand tugs-of-war which excites the Burmans to action. The performance of a complete Burmese band is a study in itself. Considering that the musicians play without a score, the harmony and strict time they observe are truly wonderful.

454. THE BURMESE HARP AND DULCIMER (p. 178).

A few specimens of genuine Burmese music are appended (pp. 216–220). No. 1 is a song in the major scale, with harp accompaniment. The first twenty bars constitute the usual prelude to music of this kind. The tendency of the Burmese musician is to repeat the vocal part as an interlude, with all the variations and embellishments he can add. The last four bars are also usually played as a symphony at the end of each verse. The prelude and symphony are not peculiar to this song but are played with all songs of the same description. No. 2 is a specimen of another style, more suited for an orchestra. Nos. 3 and 4 are examples in the minor scale. Both are very ancient. No. 3 is called *Naw-thein yôdaya*. It used to be played on the entrance of the king to the Audience Hall and is the true national anthem of the Burmans. Its beauty and grandeur need no comment. No. 4 is a popular lullaby.

It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past.